

NORTH CAROLINA METHAMPHETAMINE SUMMIT

***Attorney General
Roy Cooper***



FINAL REPORT



***RESPONDING TO METHAMPHETAMINE:
COMBATING NORTH CAROLINA'S FASTEST GROWING DRUG PROBLEM***

MAY 2004

Cover photo: State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) agents enter a North Carolina methamphetamine lab. Firefighters crouch in the foreground, ready to assist. All photographs provided by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Letter From the Attorney General</i>	1
<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>Findings</i>	6
Finding One	7
Finding Two	9
Finding Three	11
Finding Four	13
Finding Five	16
Finding Six	17
<i>Recommendations</i>	20
Strategy One	20
Strategy Two	21
Strategy Three	22
<i>Footnotes</i>	27
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	28
<i>Resources</i>	29
<i>Committee Members</i>	32



State of North Carolina

Roy Cooper
Attorney General

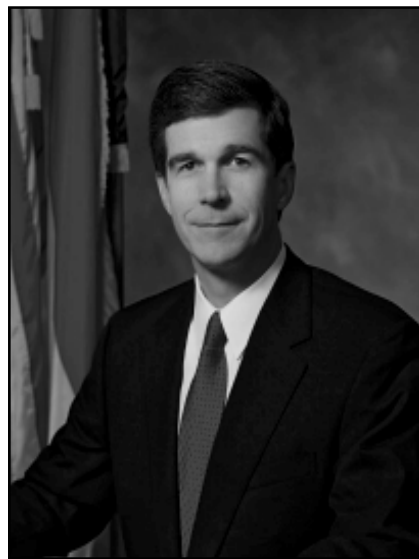
May 2004

In recent years, North Carolina has experienced a serious and growing threat from the manufacture and use of methamphetamine, sometimes known as "meth." In just the last four years, secret drug labs that produce meth have increased dramatically across North Carolina. Our State Bureau of Investigation reported nine methamphetamine lab busts in 1999. In 2003, that number had grown to 177.

Law enforcement officials, public health officers, policymakers and the media have warned about the disastrous effects of this drug. It destroys lives through addiction, mental illness, crime and violence. Just as disturbingly, these labs have put children and unsuspecting neighbors at risk by exposing them to the dangers of crime, toxic chemicals, explosions and fires. In too many cases, we find children living in the very homes where these dangerous drugs are made. In North Carolina, children have been found in at least one-fourth of the meth labs. We must stop this from happening.

To meet the challenges posed by these secret drug labs, a statewide Summit drew prosecutors, state and local law enforcement officers, public health and social services officials and business leaders, along with leaders of various state, federal and local agencies and nonprofit organizations. At the Summit, we began the work of developing a statewide strategy to tackle the meth epidemic. Those discussions were compiled in a preliminary report issued in January 2004. Since then, we have heard from concerned citizens and interested stakeholders across the state who have shared additional ideas. Many of these ideas are now set forth in the recommendations to fight back against meth and the threat it poses to our public safety.

We must attack this problem now. I ask you to join me in this fight. With your support, I know we can be successful in shutting down the meth manufacturers here in North Carolina.



A handwritten signature of Roy Cooper in cursive script.

Roy Cooper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the first steps toward fixing a problem is acknowledging that a problem exists. North Carolina has a methamphetamine problem.

Methamphetamine, or meth, is a powerful and illegal drug that can cause paranoia and violence. And unlike other potent illegal drugs, its consequences are far more deadly. Using it ruins bodies and brains, and manufacturing it destroys families and communities. Meth's impact includes toxic explosions, environmental damage, addiction, child abuse and neglect, theft and death.

The meth problem has the potential to overwhelm law enforcement, social services, public health facilities and courtrooms. In the last four years, the number of methamphetamine labs seized by law enforcement has increased by almost twenty-fold. In 2003 alone, the State Bureau of Investigation shut down 177 labs. Even more alarming is the number of children found in these toxic meth lab sites. Last year, a quarter of North Carolina homes with meth labs were found to have children residing in them.

Making the drug is easy. By cooking a handful of ordinary household chemicals, criminals can get a high that's much stronger and longer lasting than cocaine, and then sell the rest for profit. These chemicals are easily available from retail stores. The how-to recipes are accessible from an underground network of meth cooks spreading the illegal drug across the state.

North Carolina has made progress in the fight against meth, but many challenges remain. To fight the growing meth problem, Attorney General Roy Cooper convened a statewide Summit last fall in Winston-Salem. Prosecutors, state and local law enforcement officers, public health and social services officials and business leaders, along with leaders of various state, federal and local agencies and nonprofit organizations participated. Three key strategies emerged.

STRATEGY ONE: Get Tough with Meth Manufacturers

- Toughen penalties for the manufacturing of methamphetamine.
- Add penalties for child endangerment.
- Increase penalties for possession of precursor chemicals.
- Enhance penalties when a fatal overdose occurs.

STRATEGY TWO: Increase Awareness and Detection

- Educate the public about the growing problem.
- Train communities to recognize the signs of a meth lab.
- Give prosecutors information to help prosecute meth makers.

STRATEGY THREE: Improve Intervention

- Work with retail merchants to monitor the sale of precursor chemicals such as common cold remedies.
- Train first responders such as firefighters and emergency workers about the dangers of meth labs.
- Increase resources for the State Bureau of Investigation.
- Develop and disseminate technical assistance to social service agencies.
- Develop guidelines for medical evaluation and treatment.
- Support the implementation of statewide guidelines for the decontamination and reoccupancy of meth lab sites.
- Increase the availability of treatment to individuals in counties hit hardest by methamphetamine.
- Develop statewide policies and procedures for Child Protective Services concerning children who have been exposed to meth labs.

The strategies offered in this report will take time to implement, and work is underway. Fighting meth requires a comprehensive long-term plan that focuses on eliminating meth labs, preventing drug abuse and rehabilitating meth users.

Implementing these strategies will require resources. While the state has aggressively pursued federal money and grants to fund many of the recommendations, additional state resources are also critical. But even with additional resources the number of labs seized is expected to continue to grow, as public awareness increases and more people learn how to identify a meth lab. North Carolina has taken some good first steps, and following these strategies will continue the fight against these illegal drugs.

FINDINGS

Methamphetamine (commonly referred to as “meth”) is a dangerous and highly addictive illegal drug that is a growing threat to public safety. Meth labs, which produce the drug, pose significant dangers to the public, the environment, and first responders who are on the frontlines of the battle against meth.

Meth was once a problem primarily in the western United States. But over the last few years, it has spread east and hit North Carolina. “It looks like a wildfire moving east,” according to Dan Salter of the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).¹ In recent years, the secret labs that produce meth have begun to explode in North Carolina, figuratively and literally. The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) reported only nine meth labs in 1999. In 2003, agents shut down 177 such labs, nearly a twenty-fold increase. Each lab also produces a toxic waste site, and the labs frequently explode or cause fires.

The combustible and volatile mixture of chemicals used in meth labs frequently leads to fires and explosions.



To fight the alarming rise in meth labs in our state, Attorney General Roy Cooper brought together prosecutors, law enforcement officers, first responders, public health officials, policymakers and business leaders at the North Carolina Methamphetamine Summit held in Winston-Salem in October of 2003. More than 200 attendees listened to presentations made by federal, state and local officials. They heard about the rapid spread of the drug, both nationally and across our state. They learned how easy and cheap it is to make meth, and how meth drastically impacts children. Presenters at the summit told of the environmental damage meth labs create. And officials from Watauga County described how the proliferation of meth labs has strained the resources of the sheriff's department, the social services department and local prosecutors in their county.

Following the presentations, some participants worked in committees discussing meth awareness and detection, intervention, and enforcement. The committees, along with concerned citizens and stakeholders, brought forward the following findings.

FINDING ONE: State laws need to address methamphetamine manufacturing.

Law enforcement and prosecutors have had a hard time getting active prison time for meth manufacturers. Under current state law, meth manufacturers who have no past criminal record generally receive a suspended sentence with probation. One Watauga County narcotics investigator summed up his frustration to a newspaper reporter: "Some of them were back out cooking [manufacturing meth] before we could get the paperwork done."²

Current state law provides stiffer penalties for those who sell meth than for those who actually manufacture it. The bottom line is that North Carolina's current laws regarding meth manufacturing are weaker than those of many other states.

What is Methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant that impacts the central nervous system. Meth users usually experience temporary euphoria and a sense of increased energy. The typical high can last six hours or more and can produce dangerous side effects such as irritability, paranoia, violent behavior, insomnia and brain damage. Known by other names such as crank, speed, ice or wash, methamphetamine can be injected, snorted or ingested orally.

Meth can be inexpensively manufactured by mixing and cooking raw ingredients known as “precursors.” These precursors, which include common household goods and decongestant drugs containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, are widely available from local drug and retail stores. Because the drug is cheap and easy to make, it produces a large profit margin for those who sell it.

Methamphetamine is a Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substances Act. Schedule II drugs, like cocaine and PCP, have little medical use and a high potential for abuse.

Sources:

“Methamphetamine Abuse and Addiction,” *National Institute on Drug Abuse Research Report Series*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, reprinted January 2002, available online at www.nida.nih.gov/ResearchReports/Methamph/Methamph.html.

“Methamphetamine,” *North Carolina Drug Threat Assessment*, National Drug Intelligence Center, April 2003, available online at www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs3/3690/meth.htm.

FINDING TWO: Meth puts children at risk.

The growing meth problem is hurting our children. Increasingly, North Carolina law enforcement officials are finding children living in homes where meth is made. In 2003, approximately 25 percent of North Carolina homes with meth labs were found to have children residing in them.

Children playing, eating and sleeping in a meth lab are surrounded by danger. They are exposed to fires and explosions, and to toxic chemicals that result from manufacturing meth. The children are neglected, and many are also abused by meth users in the home.³ As the DEA's Chief Inspector said in his testimony before Congress, "More than any other controlled substance, methamphetamine trafficking endangers children through exposure to drug abuse, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, fire and explosion."⁴

Loaded weapons are a common sight around meth labs. On the table next to this rifle is a photo of a child. Children are found in 25 percent of meth labs seized in North Carolina.



In some instances, children witness their parents making the drug. “We had a child who went to school and told his first-grade teacher how to cook meth, and he didn’t miss a step,” said Watauga County Sheriff Mark Shook during a panel discussion at the Summit. Sheriff Shook said the first-grader described items commonly found in meth labs such as bottles with hoses, pills, acid and iodine. The child also described the manufacturing process in detail. Deputies raided the child’s home and found the lab. The county social services department moved the three children from the home to safety.

Children Found at Methamphetamine Labs in North Carolina

Year*	Number of Meth Labs Seized	Number of Children Residing in Homes with Meth Labs	Number of Children Present When the Meth Lab was Discovered
2003	177	69	37

* SBI began keeping statistics of children found in meth labs in 2003.

Not surprisingly, meth’s threat to children affects North Carolina’s social services workers as they work to care for them. As Karen Taylor George, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS), said, “County social service departments are very concerned about the serious risks to children in homes with methamphetamine labs and to the safety of workers attempting to intervene on their behalf.” In December 2003, the NCACDSS convened a meeting to develop a collaborative response and to provide support for the social services workers who are facing the challenges that meth presents. For example, meth labs that are set up in kitchens can sometimes escape detection by the untrained eye, so attendees were taught how to identify a meth lab.

FINDING THREE: The meth problem will overwhelm our ability to respond if steps are not taken.

This fast-growing illegal drug problem has already stressed our resources, but it has the potential to overwhelm North Carolina's judiciary, law enforcement, social services and public health facilities. In addition to those already mentioned, here are some of the most significant threats from meth:

Environmental Damage

Methamphetamine differs from drugs like marijuana, heroin and cocaine because the very production of the drug causes environmental damage. Meth cooks frequently dump the toxic by-products of their work into sewer systems, in the state's waters or along roadsides. The production of one pound of meth creates five to seven pounds of hazardous waste.⁵



SBI agents use protective gear in a meth lab. The agent in the foreground holds a device that "sniffs" the air for the presence of hazardous and toxic vapors.

Clean-Up Costs

The chemicals combined to manufacture meth become hazardous as the drug cooks. Solvents and fumes from meth labs are highly flammable. Dangerous gases formed during the production process can also trigger explosions and cause severe injury. Moreover, serious health problems and even death can result from inhalation of the toxic fumes produced by meth labs. When meth labs are busted, SBI agents have to take samples of chemicals as evidence for prosecution. While working in the labs, agents must wear “moon suits” with self-contained breathing systems for their protection.

Each time a meth lab is raided, agents must use disposable supplies that cost between \$400 and \$600. Afterward, HazMat (hazardous-materials) teams arrive to clean the toxic site. According to the SBI, a typical clean up can cost taxpayers between \$4,000 and \$10,000 per lab.

Cost to Clean-up Meth Labs in North Carolina

Year	Drug Enforcement Agency Cost	State and Local Costs
2003*	\$31,400	\$303,700
2002	\$51,000	\$207,200
2001	\$33,000	\$133,500

Source: Tim Binkley, United States Drug Enforcement Agency

* 2003 numbers are not reflective of the entire fiscal year cost.

Crime Laboratory Backlog

The increasing number of meth lab seizures may outstrip the SBI's ability to analyze the results. Each time a clandestine drug lab is discovered, two chemists from the SBI Crime Laboratory leave their work lab to join responders at the site. On average, SBI chemists spend 40 hours on each meth lab, compared to one hour processing a cocaine sample that has been submitted for testing. The 40 hours includes time for travel, processing at the crime scene and performing analysis upon their return to the laboratory. The SBI's forensic scientists work both ends of the case,

gathering and analyzing evidence from the site and then working with prosecutors when the case comes to trial. Roger Kahn, President of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, has said, “For states where there are tremendous numbers of [meth labs seized], you bet it is a burden . . . requiring huge amounts of time for analysis and disposal.”⁶

Criminal Activity Links

Nationally, law enforcement officials have associated the domestic production of meth with other criminal activities. According to John Horton of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, “[i]n areas where methamphetamine manufacturing is increasing, so also are car thefts, forgeries, and especially identity theft incidents.”⁷

Social Services Burden

County social services are facing unique challenges. Children are sometimes found playing on the floor, where toxic chemicals are located. They are subject to fires, explosions and abuse. These children require special and immediate attention. A child’s contaminated belongings must be destroyed and replaced. A child must go through a decontamination process. And sometimes a child must be placed in foster care because they must be removed from their home. In neighboring Tennessee, for example, some five hundred children have been placed in foster care in the past few years due to meth.⁸ As Karen Taylor George of NCACDSS, said, “County social service departments across the state face the real possibility of being overwhelmed.”

FINDING FOUR: Public awareness about the meth problem remains low.

One conclusion shared by all of the committees at the Summit was that the public is just now learning about the dangers of the drug and how to identify a meth lab.

What is a Clandestine Drug Lab?

Clandestine drug labs (often known as “clan labs”) produce a variety of illegal drugs, including ecstasy, but in recent years law enforcement officials have seized a large number of labs manufacturing methamphetamine. Once found primarily in rural or sparsely populated areas, these labs are now being discovered in all areas of the state and nation. The labs are very rudimentary and can be set up virtually anywhere. Meth labs can be large, producing huge quantities of the drug, or they can be simple kitchen labs where meth addicts cook the drug primarily for their own consumption. SBI agents and local law enforcement officials have discovered labs inside vehicles, homes, apartments, rental storage units, motel rooms and in close proximity to schools.

Source: Nancy E. Gist, “Strategic Approaches to Clandestine Drug Laboratory Enforcement,” *Bureau of Justice Assistance Fact Sheet*, United States Department of Justice, September 1999, available online at www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/bja/fs000247.pdf.

The operator of this meth lab actually posted a warning about inhalation hazards. Potentially hazardous fumes are just one of the dangers of meth labs.



Meth labs often go undetected. A mother might notice a strange chemical smell in the vicinity, but she might not be aware that her neighbor is making meth. A store clerk might not be aware that a customer who has purchased dozens of boxes of decongestant medicine containing ephedrine (a necessary ingredient in making the drug) is a meth producer. And a farmer might not be aware that the anhydrous ammonia stolen from his storage tank is a common ingredient for making meth.

In Cumberland County, law enforcement raided a meth lab operating inside a home located in a quiet neighborhood. According to news reports, neighbors did not know what was taking place. As one neighbor told a news reporter, “I see them drive by, wave . . . it was a nice house, nice neighborhood. I’m in shock.”⁹

A meth lab produces a witches’ brew of dangerous chemicals and wastes that are typically stored in a haphazard fashion.



FINDING FIVE: North Carolina has made progress in the fight against meth.

North Carolina has had a Clandestine Laboratory Response Program in place for well over a decade. The SBI developed the program in 1988 after recognizing the growing popularity of such drug labs in the western United States. This SBI program currently includes four agents who work full-time on meth labs, and the addition of a fifth agent is anticipated.

SBI agents don their protective gear as they prepare to enter a meth lab.



In addition to the full-time agents, the SBI has more than one hundred agents who are certified to work meth lab cases. These agents have been trained to operate at the highest level of hazardous chemical environments. The SBI is also partnering with the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and the North Carolina Division of Public Health to meet the new challenges posed by the increase of these labs. As Tim Binkley of the DEA observed, “North Carolina has been on the cutting edge of addressing a potentially catastrophic situation.”

Other law enforcement officers are also learning how to respond. More than 400 hundred local law enforcement officials and detectives have been trained at three-day workshops that teach them how to manage meth investigations. These workshops have been cohosted by the Regional Organized Crime Information Center, United States Attorneys' Offices of the Eastern, Middle and Western Districts of North Carolina, the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, and the North Carolina Narcotic Enforcement Officers' Association.

Finally, at the North Carolina Methamphetamine Summit, Attorney General Cooper announced grants to Watauga, Ashe, Johnston and Harnett counties, four of the counties that have been among the hardest hit by meth. The grants will make medical screenings available for children found at meth labs and will provide additional funds needed for social service workers and law officers who work these challenging cases. The lessons learned from these four counties will be used to develop a statewide protocol for treating children who have been exposed to meth manufacturing. The \$312,000 Drug Endangered Children (DEC) grant was made available to the Attorney General by the United States Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office. North Carolina is the first state on the East coast to be awarded such a grant.

FINDING SIX: North Carolina must take a statewide and comprehensive approach to fighting meth.

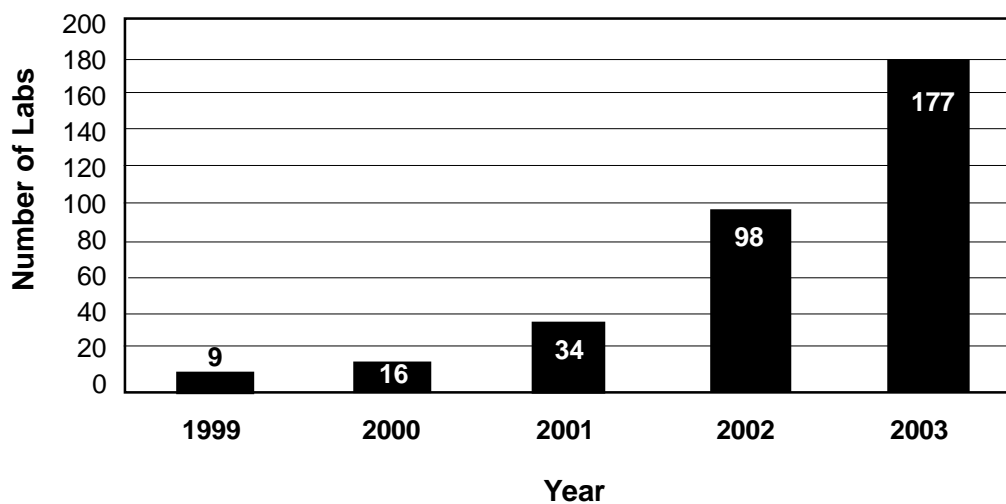
Meth is a particularly dramatic problem in rural counties such as Watauga County, which is commonly referred to as "ground zero" in North Carolina's fight against the drug. However, the problem is now spreading across the state. In 2003, eight meth labs were raided in Johnston County. "Although you might notice that these labs have been found in forty-five counties, you can bet that all one hundred counties in our state will experience this problem," predicted Attorney General Cooper. In fact, the SBI expects to shut down at least 300 meth labs this year.

Methamphetamine Summit: Final Report

The SBI uses mobile lab response trucks to carry equipment to meth lab sites.



SBI Clandestine Laboratory Response 1999 - 2003



With the growth of meth labs expected to impact the entire state, North Carolina must pursue a statewide approach in fighting this drug. State government must partner with federal and local agencies along with the private sector. As Attorney General Cooper said during the Summit, “Meth is a problem that will require a comprehensive approach. It’s clear that law enforcement officials, prosecutors, public health officials, policymakers, social service personnel and emergency managers need to work together.”

An SBI agent holds contaminated tubing from a homemade meth lab. It was being held in place with duct tape.



RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGY ONE: Get Tough with Meth Manufacturers

Toughen penalties for the manufacture of methamphetamine. To address the danger and threat to public safety posed by meth labs, the General Assembly should increase penalties against individuals who manufacture meth. In particular, the legislature should increase the penalty from a Class H felony to at least a Class C felony.

Add penalties for child endangerment. In 2003, approximately 25 percent of North Carolina homes with meth labs were found to have children residing in them. Due to the number of children exposed to toxic chemicals and the risk of explosion and fire, the General Assembly should enhance the criminal penalty when a child is present or otherwise endangered by exposure to meth.

Increase penalties for possession of precursor chemicals. Currently, the penalties associated with possession of precursor chemicals (the ingredients used in making meth) are less severe in North Carolina than in other states. The General Assembly should provide stronger penalties for possession of precursor substances to discourage the growth of methamphetamine labs by increasing the criminal penalty from a Class H felony to at least a Class F felony. The legislature should also include additional precursor chemicals that are used to make meth that may be omitted from the current Schedule II controlled substance list. As one assistant district attorney commented, “We have to write the laws that fit the problem.”

Enhance penalties for providers of methamphetamine when a fatal overdose occurs. Under current North Carolina law, an overdose death can lead to a charge of second-degree murder against the person who provided the illegal drug that caused the death. The General Assembly should add methamphetamine to the list of controlled substances that can trigger a charge of second-degree murder when the provided drug causes an overdose death.

STRATEGY TWO: Increase Awareness and Detection

Educate the public about the growing meth problem. Public awareness must be a key component in North Carolina's response to the methamphetamine problem. A statewide awareness campaign using informational videos and material to highlight the impact of the meth problem on children, the environment and taxpayers should be developed. The awareness campaign should include the development of a website to provide the public with information about meth. The state should also mail pamphlets about the meth problem and the statewide awareness campaign to community organizations, churches and local agencies.

Meth Sundays

Sheriff Mark Shook of Watauga County has more experience with meth labs than any other local law enforcement officer in our state. Last year, the SBI and local law enforcement shut down 34 meth labs in Watauga County, more than any other county. When Sheriff Shook is not busting meth labs, he has been educating the people in his county by speaking at churches about the dangers of the drug. He calls it "Meth Sundays." At each presentation, Sheriff Shook talks about the powerful addiction of the drug, how the drug is manufactured, and how to detect a meth lab. His presentations are working. "I've gotten several good leads on labs and have eliminated three this year [in 2004] based on information from people who attended a 'Meth Sunday' meeting," said Sheriff Shook.

Contact Information: Mail: Sheriff Mark Shook, Watauga County Sheriff's Office, 330 Queen Street, Boone, North Carolina 28607. Phone: (828) 264-3761. Email: mark.shook@ncmail.net. Website: www.wataugacounty.org/sheriff/index.html.

Train communities to recognize the signs of a meth lab.

Farmers, garbage collectors, hotel and motel workers, landlords and others should be educated about the meth problem and trained in how to detect meth labs. To accomplish this training, the state should distribute written information, develop training videos and make training information available on the meth awareness website. As Steve Surratt of the National Drug Intelligence Center commented, "Awareness is key. We need to get the information out on what products are used in making methamphetamine."

Give prosecutors information to help prosecute meth makers. The Attorney General and the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys should continue to develop strategies for prosecuting meth-related cases. As one state prosecutor commented at the Summit, “We need to be educated about this problem, including the precursor chemicals involved and their significance. An educated prosecutor can then communicate the importance of these precursors to the judge.” Prosecutors should also be informed about the use of existing environmental laws such as hazardous waste criminal penalties, which can sometimes be used to bring additional charges against meth lab operators.

STRATEGY THREE: Improve Intervention

Work with retail merchants to develop a program to monitor the sale of precursor chemicals. Law enforcement and public health experts agree that a critical ingredient required to make any type of meth is ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, which is usually acquired by meth lab operators from over-the-counter cold medications. Limiting the easy availability of these products can be achieved by controlling the amount of medication an individual can purchase. Increased vigilance by retailers can also prevent the theft of these products.

Retail merchants should work closely with the Attorney General to develop a program to limit the sale and theft of all precursor ingredients used in meth labs. This program should include training posters that can be displayed in employee break rooms, a training video for store clerks and management, and on-site training through the meth awareness website. In addition, managers should be trained in practices to limit the quantity of precursor products that may be purchased by a single customer or are available on store shelves at any one time. Other suggested practices for managers include placing precursors behind a service counter and notifying customers about video surveillance on aisles where these products are kept. Finally, managers and clerks should be trained in reporting any suspicious transactions to law enforcement.

Train first responders about the dangers of meth labs.

Firefighters, emergency medical personnel and law enforcement officers are on the frontlines of the battle against meth. In 2003, twenty-seven first responders from North Carolina were injured from exposure to the toxic fumes and flames produced by meth labs. It is critical that these workers receive the training they need. The North Carolina Department of Justice (including the SBI and the North Carolina Justice Academy) should work closely with the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and the North Carolina Fire and Rescue Commission to develop a video to educate law enforcement officials, emergency managers and firefighters about how to respond safely to meth labs.

Rowan County Meth Watch Program

In February 2004, United States Attorney Anna Mills Wagoner hosted a meeting to introduce the idea of a Rowan County Meth Watch program. Local business leaders, educators, child care providers, and state and local elected officials gathered to support the idea. Wagoner addressed the business community in particular saying, "You retailers truly hold the key to the kingdom of solving this problem." Following the meeting, local business owners came together to fight the meth problem in their county. The Rowan County Meth Watch program is designed to limit the accessibility of products containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine by placing signs outside and inside the stores, and training employees to identify and report suspicious transactions. The Rowan County Meth Watch program is the first of its kind in the state.

Contact Information: Mail: Richard Perkins, US Attorney's Office - Middle District of North Carolina, 101 South Edgeworth Street, Federal Law Building, Greensboro, North Carolina 27401. Phone: (336) 333-5351.

Increase resources for the State Bureau of Investigation.

The State Bureau of Investigation is the only law enforcement agency trained to process meth labs. The SBI needs additional resources. These needs include:

More crime laboratory personnel and expanded facilities

The demand on the SBI Crime Laboratory to address meth labs has placed a tremendous workload on the lab and its personnel. The General Assembly should fund new chemists, latent print examiners and evidence technicians to address the increased workload. Furthermore, the legislature should fund expansion of the Raleigh and Western SBI Crime Laboratories.

More agents in western North Carolina

With the western part of the state hardest hit by meth, the General Assembly should fund additional SBI agents in the two western districts. Furthermore, additional SBI agents should be hired to oversee and coordinate the raids, the clean-up and the evidence collection at these lab sites.

More agents for training and coordinating investigations

With more than one hundred SBI agents now certified as clan lab agents, the General Assembly should fund an SBI agent to coordinate such training. In addition, because SBI agents must coordinate investigations with local law enforcement officers, the legislature should fund more SBI agents.

Develop and disseminate technical assistance to social service agencies. Social workers need more information and tools. In Watauga County, the social services department has taken the lead in establishing their Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Response Team. The team members include law enforcement officials, prosecutors, child welfare personnel, medical and public health providers. The purpose of this team is to develop a multi-disciplinary response to children found in meth labs. Social service departments across the state must learn how to create a similar DEC Response Team.

North Carolina Foster Parents Association Clothing Drive for Children

The North Carolina Foster Parents Association has established the “Undie Sunday” program to provide undergarments to children exposed to meth labs. Children removed from labs are unable to bring *any* belongings with them. Social service workers who remove these children from their meth-infested homes must have clothes available to them. The North Carolina Foster Parents Association recruited churches across the state to collect undergarments and socks. These clothing items will be distributed to local departments of social services. As Kay Gillis of the North Carolina Foster Parents Association said, “The children removed from meth lab houses come to us with only the clothes on their back. Through this program, we are able to find clothing for them.”

Contact Information: Mail: North Carolina Foster Parents Association/University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Attention: Undie Sunday, Post Office Box 26170, Greensboro, North Carolina 26170. Phone: (866) NCF-PA4U. Email: ncfpa@uncg.edu. Website: www.ncfpa.org.

Develop guidelines for medical evaluation and treatment.

Because the meth problem is relatively new to North Carolina, the medical community needs guidance and training to identify, evaluate and treat injuries and illness caused by exposure to a meth lab and meth use. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services should collaborate with the North Carolina Medical Society, the North Carolina Pediatric Society and other organizations and agencies to develop such guidelines. The Department of Health and Human Services should work to distribute the guidelines to medical providers across the state.

Support the implementation of statewide guidelines for the decontamination and reoccupancy of meth lab sites. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services’ Division of Public Health has developed guidelines for decontamination and reoccupancy of structures that have been associated with meth labs. The state should support the Department of Health and Human Services’ effort to implement these guidelines.

Increase the availability of treatment to individuals in counties hit hardest by methamphetamine. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services should pilot comprehensive treatment programs in the four counties most impacted by this drug. The Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, through substance abuse and the child mental health block grants, should make comprehensive treatment and community education available. Based on the information gathered and the lessons learned from these counties, the Department of Health and Human Services should also provide training and technical assistance to other communities regarding the most effective treatment methods.

Develop statewide policies and procedures for Child Protective Services concerning children who have been exposed to meth labs. A child living in the presence of a meth lab is exposed to a variety of physical dangers and psychological traumas. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Social Services, along with the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services, should develop statewide policies to provide immediate protection for these children. Once developed, the Department of Health and Human Services should train social workers on these policies. In addition, training should be provided to social workers on how to ensure their personal safety when responding to a meth lab.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Donna Leinwand, “‘Meth’ moves east,” *USA Today*, July 29, 2003.
- ² Martha Quillin, “Rural county is meth central,” *News & Observer*, September 2, 2002.
- ³ Karen Swetlow, “Children at Clandestine Methamphetamine Labs: Helping Meth’s Youngest Victims,” *Office of Victims of Crimes Bulletin*, United States Department of Justice, June 2003, available online at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/bulletins/children/welcome.html.
- ⁴ Rogelio E. Guevara, “Facing the Methamphetamine Problem in America,” *Statement Before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources*, July 18, 2003.
- ⁵ “Methamphetamine,” *Office of National Drug Control Policy Fact, Executive Office of the President*, November 2003, available at www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/factsht/methamph/.
- ⁶ Kimberly Hefling, “Meth Cases Create Massive Backlogs at Police Crime Labs,” *Associated Press*, September 14, 2003.
- ⁷ John C. Horton, “Facing the Methamphetamine Problem in America,” *Statement Before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources*, July 18, 2003.
- ⁸ Patrik Jonsson, “Towns pitch in to save ‘meth orphans’ of Appalachia,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 31, 2003.
- ⁹ Greg Barnes, “Cumberland County Authorities Bust Meth Labs,” *EyewitnessNews11.com*, April 8, 2003.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank John Bason, Jay Chaudhuri, Greg McLeod, William McKinney, Julia White, Carol Young and Noelle Talley of the North Carolina Attorney General's Office; Ann Hamlin, Jerry Ratley, Van Shaw and Larry Smith of the State Bureau of Investigation; Barbara Yow of the North Carolina Justice Academy; District Attorney Thomas H. Lock of the Eleventh Prosecutorial District; District Attorney Thomas Keith of the Twenty-First Prosecutorial District; Charlie Byrd of the Twenty-Fourth Prosecutorial District; District Attorney Ronald Moore of the Twenty-Eighth Prosecutorial District; Anne Tompkins and Jill Rose of the United States Attorney's Office of the Western District of North Carolina; and Douglas Campbell, Steve Cline, Rob Lamme and JoAnn Lamm of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

RESOURCES

Center for Community Safety. The Center for Community Safety promotes the use of community-based research to actively guide policymakers and practitioners in targeted responses to significant public safety issues. Researchers and interested practitioners are encouraged to contact the Center to discuss ways in which practical analysis can help address the meth problem. One example of the Center's work has been their coordination and development of a regional meth task force in the western part of the state.

Contact Information. Mail: Sylvia Oberle, Executive Director, Center for Community Safety, 500 West Fourth Street, Suite 102, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27101. Phone: (336) 750-3470. Email: oberles@wssu.edu. Website: <http://gorams.wssu.edu/ccs>.

Drug Endangered Children Grant. In October 2003, the \$312,000 Drug Endangered Children (DEC) grant was made available to the Office of Attorney General Roy Cooper by the United States Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office. This grant is being used to provide medical screenings for children in the pilot counties who have been exposed to meth and additional funds to law enforcement. The grant will also be used to disseminate technical assistance to other social service departments across the state.

Contact Information: Mail: Jerry Ratley, Special Agent in Charge, North Carolina Department of Justice, State Bureau of Investigation, 501 Industrial Avenue, Greensboro, North Carolina 27406. Phone: (336) 256-1364. Email: jratley@ncdoj.com. Website: <http://sbi.jus.state.nc.us/sbimain/ncsbi.htm>.

North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services. The North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS) provides periodic methamphetamine training conferences to county social service agencies and their community partners. Furthermore, NCACDSS is developing a link on their web page to share county "best practices" of meth response teams.

Contact Information: Mail: Donna Pygott, North Carolina Association of County Director of Social Services, 3824 Barrett Drive, Suite 102, Raleigh, North Carolina 27609. Phone: (919) 786-4016. Email: donna@ncacdss.org. Website: www.ncacdss.org.

North Carolina Department of Justice – Attorney General’s Office. In October 2003, the Attorney General convened the Methamphetamine Summit in Winston-Salem. The Attorney General’s staff coordinates a number of recommendations found in this final report.

Contact Information: Mail: Jay Chaudhuri, Special Counsel to the Attorney General, North Carolina Department of Justice, 9001 Mail Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-9001. Phone: (919) 716-6400. Email: jchaudhuri@ncdoj.com. Website: www.ncdoj.com.

North Carolina Department of Justice - Justice Academy. The North Carolina Justice Academy trains thousands of criminal justice personnel throughout the state. The Academy offers a methamphetamine investigation course, an advanced course designed for narcotics investigators. Participants receive detailed training on the current techniques used to manufacture and deliver methamphetamine, and are introduced to proactive and reactive investigative strategies.

Contact Information. Mail: Dan Heinz, North Carolina Justice Academy, Eastern Campus, Post Office Box 99, Salemburg, North Carolina 28385. Phone: (910) 525-4151. Email: dheinz@ncdoj.com. Website: www.jus.state.nc.us/NCJA.

North Carolina Department of Justice - State Bureau of Investigation. The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation has original jurisdiction to investigate all controlled substances, including methamphetamine. Members of the Clandestine Laboratory Response Team offer training and presentations to select first responder and law enforcement groups.

Contact Information. Mail: Van Shaw, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Clandestine Laboratory Response Program Director/Coordinator for Select Training, 11907 Sam Roper Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina 28269. Phone: (704) 948-3660. Email: vshaw@ncdoj.com. Website: <http://sbi.jus.state.nc.us/sbimain/ncsbi.htm>.

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services - Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. The division will be providing training and technical assistance in meth treatment to counties impacted by methamphetamine based upon “best practices” identified from pilot programs.

Contact Information: Mail: Flo Stein, Chief of Community Policy Management, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse, Department of Health and Human Services, 3004 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-3004. Phone: (919) 733-0696. Email: flo.stein@ncmail.net. Website: www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/sas.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Awareness and Detection Committee

Committee Chairs

Van Shaw, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, State Bureau of Investigation

Mark Nelson, Special Agent in Charge, State Bureau of Investigation

*Catherine Anderson, Project Manager, Dept. of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention*

Steven Cline, Section Chief, Dept. of Health and Human Services

James Hobbs, Director, Hospitality Alliance of North Carolina

*Scott Parker, Training Coordinator, NC Narcotics Enforcement Officers'
Association*

Robin Pendergraft, Director, State Bureau of Investigation

Tony Troop, Program Consultant, Dept. of Health and Human Services

Intervention Committee

Committee Chairs

Jay Chaudhuri, Special Counsel, Department of Justice

Ann Hamlin, Special Agent, State Bureau of Investigation

Jerry Ratley, Special Agent in Charge, State Bureau of Investigation

Douglas Campbell, Branch Head, Dept. of Health and Human Services

Robert Griffin, President, NC State Firemen's Association

Thomas Keith, District Attorney, 21st Prosecutorial District

Fran Preston, President, NC Retail Merchants Association

Martie Stanford, Director, NC Justice Academy

Steve Surratt, Field Program Specialist, National Drug Intelligence Center

*Anna Mills Wagoner, United States Attorney, US Attorney's Office,
Middle District of NC*

Enforcement Committee

Committee Chairs

Greg McLeod, Legislative Counsel, Department of Justice

Larry Smith, Assistant Director, State Bureau of Investigation

Rob Bailless, Special Agent, US Drug Enforcement Administration

Frank Brown, Special Agent in Charge, State Bureau of Investigation

Charles Byrd, Assistant District Attorney, 24th Prosecutorial District

Sherry Giles, Epidemiologist, Dept. of Health and Human Services

Phil Hamby, President, NC Narcotics Enforcement Officers' Association

Bill Hart, Special Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice

Jeff Hunt, President, NC Conference of District Attorneys

Mark Shook, Sheriff, Watauga County Sheriff's Office

Melanie Thomas, Assistant Director, State Bureau of Investigation

John H. Watters, Legal Counsel, State Bureau of Investigation

A total of 500 copies of this public document were printed by the North Carolina Justice Academy, North Carolina Department of Justice, at a cost of \$343.28 or \$.69 per copy. These figures include only the direct costs of reproduction. They do not include preparation, handling, or distribution costs.